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SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 22 October 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a letter dated 17 October 1996 addressed to you by Mrs. Tansu Çiller, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its enclosure could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 81 and 145, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 17 October 1996 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter dated 30 September 1996, addressed by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, to you and circulated as a General Assembly and Security Council document (A/51/438-S/1996/812) of the same day, I would like to bring the following to your attention.

My Government finds it profoundly disappointing that the contents of Mr. Al-Sahaf's letter, in their simplest meaning, overlook the consistent policy Turkey has pursued from the outset of the Gulf crisis. The basic elements of this policy are the following:

(a) The preservation of the territorial integrity, sovereignty, independence and political unity of Iraq;

(b) Iraq's full compliance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and its reintegration with the international community;

(c) The right of the entire people of Iraq to freely determine their future;

(d) Meeting, in a satisfactory way, the humanitarian needs of the people of Iraq;

(e) Reducing the negative economic and security implications for Turkey of the situation that has emerged in Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War.

I do not intend to dwell at length on our position regarding the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) and the overall impact of the United Nations sanctions on Turkey as well as on the people of Iraq since these were not raised specifically in Mr. Al-Sahaf's letter. I would only mention in this context that the approach we have taken on those two points reflects Turkey's appreciation of the difficulties faced by the people of Iraq as well as our own.

It is a fact that the absence of authority in northern Iraq has caused immense security problems for Turkey ever since the Gulf War. Yet neither the responsibility nor the consequences of Iraq's inability to exercise authority in the northern part of the country can be attributed to Turkish policies. Turkey cannot be expected to stand idle until Iraq reassumes its obligations, when its own territorial integrity and security are incessantly threatened by the blatant cross-border attacks of a terrorist organization based in and operating from the Iraqi territory profiting from this power vacuum. Considering that Iraq is not in a position to fulfil, among other international requirements for the prevention of commission of terrorist acts from its territory, its written commitment to you and the President of the Security Council on 11 June 1991 and 23 January 1992 pursuant to paragraph 32 of resolution 687 (1991), it is

surprising to see Mr. Al-Sahaf condemning Turkey for undertaking this responsibility in view of the lack of any other alternative.

As for the recent evacuation of people from northern Iraq, Turkey considers this whole operation a humanitarian one designed to prevent further complications in the area.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(Signed) Tansu ÇILLER
Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Deputy Prime Minister
of the Republic of Turkey